



SUNDAY SCHOOL AUGUST 31, 2025

Prayer:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

New Testament.....2

Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16 2

 God is with Us..... 2

 Overview 2

 Biblical Context..... 2

 Historical / Non-Biblical / Political Context 3

 Historical Timeline / Biblical Timeframe..... 3

 Scholarly Metaphorical Interpretation With Modern-Day & Grant County Context 3

 Summary 3

Gospel.....4

Luke 14:1, 7-14..... 4

 Invite the Poor to Your Banquet..... 4

 Overview 4

 Biblical Context..... 5

 Historical / Non-Biblical / Political Context 5

 Historical Timeline / Biblical Timeframe..... 5

 Scholarly Metaphorical Interpretation With Modern-Day & Grant County Context 5

 Summary 6



New Testament

Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16

GOD IS WITH US

(Written to Jewish Christians who were possibly discouraged)

Let mutual affection continue.

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.

Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them, those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured.

Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers.

Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have, for he himself has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you."

So, we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?"

Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name.

OVERVIEW

Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16 closes the letter with practical exhortations (emphatic direction) for Christian living. The writer emphasizes love, **hospitality**, compassion, fidelity, contentment, respect for leaders, and above all, faith in Christ, who is "the same yesterday, today, and forever." The final verses stress **worship expressed through both words (praise) and actions (doing good, sharing with others)**. This passage shifts from the theological depth of earlier chapters to down-to-earth guidance, encouraging believers to live out faith in community.

BIBLICAL CONTEXT

The Letter to the Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians, likely facing discouragement and possible persecution, tempted to return to Judaism. Earlier chapters emphasized Christ as the superior high priest and the ultimate sacrifice. By chapter 13, the writer transitions to exhortations, showing how theology translates into daily life.

Key themes:

- **Brotherly love and hospitality** as central marks of Christian community.
- **Suffering solidarity**—remembering those in prison and mistreated, reflecting Christ's compassion.
- **Marriage and contentment**—contrasted with adultery and greed.
- **Leadership and teaching**—Christ as the eternal, unchanging anchor.



- **Sacrificial worship**—no longer through temple rituals but through praise and doing good.

HISTORICAL / NON-BIBLICAL / POLITICAL CONTEXT

The audience lived in the late 1st century (likely before the destruction of the Temple in AD 70, though scholars debate). Social pressures included:

- **Persecution:** Early Christians often faced imprisonment and property loss (Hebrews 10:32–34).
- **Cultural expectation of hospitality:** In the ancient world, welcoming strangers (especially travelers and messengers of the gospel) was both a duty and a risk.
- **Greco-Roman household values:** Fidelity in marriage and proper financial ethics were public virtues, but Christians grounded these not in civic duty, but in God’s covenant faithfulness.
- **Religious instability:** Many religions shifted with emperors and philosophies. Hebrews asserts Christ’s permanence—unchanging in a world of uncertainty.

HISTORICAL TIMELINE / BIBLICAL TIMEFRAME

- **AD 30–33:** Jesus’ ministry, crucifixion, resurrection.
- **AD 50–65:** Pauline letters circulated; Jewish and Gentile Christians spread through the empire.
- **AD 64:** Nero’s persecution of Christians in Rome.
- **AD 70:** Destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. If Hebrews predates this, the imagery of sacrifice and priesthood is even more poignant.
- **AD 70–90:** Likely timeframe of Hebrews’ composition. By then, communities were scattered, facing persecution, and the call to steadfastness was urgent.

SCHOLARLY METAPHORICAL INTERPRETATION WITH MODERN-DAY & GRANT COUNTY CONTEXT

Metaphorically, this passage paints the **Christian life as a lived sacrifice:**

- **Love and hospitality** are “altars” upon which faith is offered. In modern Grant County, this might mean welcoming newcomers—whether families moving in for work, people displaced by economic hardship, or marginalized individuals often overlooked.
- **Remembering the imprisoned/mistreated** applies today in advocacy for those caught in addiction, incarceration, or systemic poverty—issues rural Indiana knows well.
- **Contentment** is countercultural (values, ideas, or behavior that oppose and stand in contrast to those of the mainstream or established society) in a consumer-driven society. The reminder that “the Lord is my helper” challenges the Midwestern temptation to measure worth by possessions, land, or status.
- **Leadership and Christ’s permanence** (lasting indefinitely) resonate where institutions—churches, local newspapers, even factories—rise and fall. While communities experience change, Christ remains steady.
- **Sacrifices of praise and good works** remind believers that worship isn’t confined to Sunday mornings, but includes volunteering at food pantries, supporting local farmers, or helping a neighbor repair a roof.

The metaphor of Christ being “the same yesterday, today, and forever” functions as an anchor in turbulent times—whether the economic downturns that affect Marion and Grant County or cultural shifts that challenge traditional values.

SUMMARY

Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16 provides the epistle’s final call: live out faith in visible, practical ways. It exhorts believers to:



- Keep loving one another, strangers, and the suffering.
- Honor marriage and live with contentment.
- Recognize Christ's eternal presence and leadership.
- Offer sacrifices of praise and acts of goodness.

For first-century Christians, this was a survival ethic; for today's church in Grant County, it is both a grounding and guiding ethic: faith expressed not just in doctrine, but in how we treat neighbors, strangers, and those in need.

Gospel

Luke 14:1, 7-14

INVITE THE POOR TO YOUR BANQUET

(Jesus dining with the Pharisees)

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the Sabbath, they were watching him closely.

When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable.

"When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host, and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give this person your place,' and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place.

"But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers and sisters or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

OVERVIEW

This passage occurs as Jesus is dining at the home of a Pharisee leader on the Sabbath. Luke frames the setting as one of observation and scrutiny—the Pharisees are watching Jesus, and he in turn is watching them. Jesus first notices how the invited guests vie for the best seats at the table. He responds with a parable about humility, teaching that it is better to sit in the lowest place and be honored later than to assume a place of privilege and risk being humiliated. He then directly instructs his host that true hospitality is not about inviting those who can repay, but about welcoming the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. The passage culminates in a promise of heavenly reward for those who practice this radical hospitality.



BIBLICAL CONTEXT

- **Pharisee's house:** Pharisees were respected religious leaders who valued ritual purity, adherence to the Law, and social status within Jewish society. Inviting Jesus could have been both a test and an honor.
- **Seating at banquets:** In ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman culture, where you sat at a table reflected your honor and social standing. Guests often jockeyed for the “places of honor.”
- **Hospitality:** The Law of Moses already emphasized care for the marginalized (Deuteronomy 15:7–11, Leviticus 19:9–10). **Jesus intensifies this expectation: true righteousness seeks no repayment.** This kind of aligns with our previous lesson on “Good Deeds are not Transactional!” Meaning, don’t expect anything in return for a good deed ... not even a “thank you.” If you do, then it’s no longer a good deed, but a transaction. I did this for you and you do this for me.
- **Kingdom vision:** This teaching anticipates the eschatological banquet (Isaiah 25:6–9; Revelation 19:9), where the marginalized are honored and the proud are humbled.

HISTORICAL / NON-BIBLICAL / POLITICAL CONTEXT

- **Banquets in the Roman world:** Meals were not only social events but also political tools. Hosting elites could build alliances, secure favors, or enhance one’s reputation. This “quid pro quo” hospitality excluded those who could not reciprocate. **Same theme ... this for that ... if you can give me something, then I’ll give you something in return. If you can’t, then I won’t.**
- **Honor-shame society:** First-century Palestine operated on honor as social currency. To seek a better seat was not just personal vanity; it was a way to climb the social ladder. Jesus’ reversal challenged this entire cultural economy. **Where do we see this in today’s political climate? Everywhere, those that contribute to campaigns are expecting something in return.**
- **Roman patronage system:** Wealthy hosts gave banquets for clients who, in return, offered loyalty and public praise. Jesus undermines this by saying the true guest list should include those who can give nothing in return. **How can we, at Herbst, address our guest list?**
- **Jewish expectation of the messianic banquet:** Many Jews anticipated that in the age to come, a great banquet would be held by God for Israel’s righteous. Jesus redefines who gets to sit at that table.

HISTORICAL TIMELINE / BIBLICAL TIMEFRAME

- **Circa AD 28–30:** Likely late in Jesus’ Galilean ministry, as he is increasingly engaging with Pharisees and teaching about the Kingdom through meals, healings, and parables.
- **Within the broader Gospel of Luke:** This story belongs to Luke’s “travel narrative” (Luke 9:51–19:27), where Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem. Along the way, he teaches about discipleship, humility, and inclusion.
- **Near crucifixion timeframe:** The growing tension between Jesus and religious leaders (including his Sabbath healings) sets the stage for eventual opposition and arrest in Jerusalem.

SCHOLARLY METAPHORICAL INTERPRETATION WITH MODERN-DAY & GRANT COUNTY CONTEXT

- **Humility over self-promotion:** Jesus’ parable critiques ambition driven by pride. In modern terms, it challenges the “resume culture” where people strive to prove worth through titles, status, or possessions. In a local Grant County context, it could mirror how people may jockey for recognition in church, community boards, or even local politics—forgetting that service, not status, reflects true greatness. **What is it about “status”? What is the intrigue? What makes it important for us to be “rubbing shoulders” with famous or influential people?**



- **Hospitality beyond reciprocity:** Jesus' directive to invite the poor and marginalized translates into a call for *churches and communities to serve without expecting donations, membership growth, or political advantage*. In Grant County, this could look like supporting the unemployed, welcoming immigrants, or including those with disabilities—not because it boosts reputation, but because it reflects Christ.
- **Banquet as metaphor for community life:** Just as the banquet was a symbol of social belonging in Jesus' day, today's "banquets" might be community events, schools, or social circles. Jesus reminds us that the Kingdom turns these upside down: the overlooked neighbor, the single parent, the recovering addict—these are the honored guests.
- **Kingdom economics:** In a county where economic shifts (loss of factories, housing shortages, reliance on service jobs) have reshaped lives, this teaching critiques the transactional mindset of "what can you do for me?" and instead calls for generosity and hospitality as a form of faith.

SUMMARY

Luke 14:1, 7–14 presents Jesus at a Pharisee's table, where he uses the social dynamics of seating and hospitality to illustrate Kingdom values. He warns against prideful self-promotion and redefines hospitality as extending welcome to those unable to repay. Historically, this teaching subverted both Jewish and Greco-Roman norms of honor, patronage, and reciprocity. Spiritually, it foreshadows the great heavenly banquet where the humble will be exalted and the excluded brought in. Metaphorically applied to modern life—including Grant County—this passage challenges communities to rethink honor, generosity, and belonging: true Christian living means welcoming and serving without expectation of return, trusting God for the ultimate reward.

PARDON MY PLANET

BY VIC LEE

